Lavender Library, Archives
and Cultural Exchange
Sacramento, CA

Lambda Letters Project

July, 1993 Newsletter

32550

6212 Silverton Way, Carmichael, California 95608 Phone (916) 965-6851

Volunteers Needed—We Want You!

In its three years of operation, the Lambda Letters Project has clearly been a great success. Look at the mail sent out. In 1990 the Project sent about 4,000 letters. The next year this figure more than doubled to around 9,200 letters. In 1992 we sent 20,000 letters. In the first six months of this year we have sent already 16,000 letters! Will we be able to hit 40,000 by year's end?

During this entire time we have had no paid staff, and the number of "core" staff volunteers has remained level. In fact, we actually have fewer volunteers now than we did before to do such monthly tasks as stuffing letters into envelopes. Yet the number of Lambda Letters writers continues to grow at a rapid rate *all over California*! We have also added a monthly newsletter—the one you are now reading. Sometimes, between our monthly cycle, we send letters from the Project on your behalf to legislators and others. Since we wish to continue these efforts and services, and maintain our current size—if not our exponential growth—we have a major need for more volunteers.

Don't worry about your level of experience; we will be happy to train you. We will even accept

Continued on p. 2

In this issue:

Write to the President 1–2
Housing for People with AIDS 2
Additional AIDS Funding 3
Breast Cancer Act 2
San Diego Pride Festival 3

Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual Issue

Write to the President

Please write to President Clinton at the address shown on the enclosed sample letter. Urge him to end the ban—without qualification or exception—on lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the military.

This spring President Clinton hinted that he might qualify an end to the current ban by limiting lesbian, gay, and bisexual service people to certain occupations or by housing them in segregated barracks. Recently he indicated that he might establish the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. While the full details of this policy are not yet clear, it appears that lesbians, gays, and bisexuals would still have to keep their sexual orientation secret in order to avoid being discharged from the service.

President Clinton has shown himself to be vulnerable to pressure on this and other issues. For instance, besides waffling on the military ban, he has changed his mind about fees for grazing and mining on federal lands. If enough of the right kind of pressure is brought to bear, he may yet do the right thing on the military ban. The views of Californians are particularly important to him because of the pivotal part we played in his election victory. He will be counting on California in the next election too.

Urge the President to lift the ban completely and without qualification. Remind him of the active role that uniformed service members have played in opposing his anti-ban policy and of the threat that this represents to his role as Commander in Chief and to the principle of civilian control of the military. Let the President know you are aware

Continued on p. 2

HIV Disease/AIDS Issue

Funding Housing for People with AIDS

Several years ago Congress authorized the AIDS Housing Opportunities Act (AHOA), which was intended to assist many forms of housing programs designed to prevent homelessness among people with AIDS. As with many government-funded social programs, the needs have far outstripped the reality of funding. Ever since the change in the case definition of AIDS went into effect in January, the number of persons eligible for these funds has increased significantly. Likewise, more communities have become eligible for these funds. At the same time, California's state budget for social programs remains woefully inadequate and the "trickle down" from the state to counties and cities continues to be just that: a trickle. In effect, more and more needy people are competing for shrinking dollars. Please sign the letters to Senators Boxer and Feinstein asking them to lobby and vote for increases in funding for the AHOA in the 1994 federal fiscal year.

Volunteers Needed!

Continued from p. 1

volunteers for a limited term, say, six months. We ask you only to join us in a friendly group setting for a few hours a month. While many of the tasks for which we need help require you to reside in the Sacramento area, not all of them do. So you can still help us if you live far from the Capital.

Attached to this month's newsletter is a volunteer information sheet and sign-up form. Please read it and sign up to do one of the needed jobs. *You can contribute to the further success of the Lambda Letters Project!*

Write the President

Continued from p. 1

that there is no credible evidence to support the current ban and that political pressure is the *only* reason he has hesitated, so far, from lifting it. Urge him to fulfill his promise to the American people by lifting the ban, once and for all.

Women's Issue

Breast Cancer Affects Us All!

All women—lesbian, bisexual, and straight—are at risk of getting breast cancer. Every twelve minutes in the U.S. a woman dies of breast cancer; every three minutes a woman is diagnosed. Over the course of their lifetime, one in eight women will develop breast cancer.

Despite these frightening statistics, California has yet to spend one penny for breast cancer research. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of uninsured women are denied access to life-saving and cost-saving early detection services.

That is why the passage of AB 478 is so important. This bill, the Breast Cancer Act of 1993, will raise the cigarette tax two cents a pack to create a $38 million Breast Cancer Fund. The Fund will finance research into the causes, cure, and prevention of breast cancer. It will also provide early detection services for uninsured women.

This money is vital because so little is known about the causes, cure, or healthy detection of breast cancer. Research in these areas has been frightfully dismal and little money has been made available to fund it.

Most of us have in some way experienced the devastating impact of breast cancer. Perhaps you have a family member or friend who has died of, overcome, or is currently fighting the ravages of this dreadful disease. In California alone, 4,258 women died from breast cancer and 15,999 were diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989 (Source: "California Women's Health Project," Sacramento: Calif. Elected Women's Association for Educational Research, 1993.)

This bill has already passed the Assembly and will be before the Senate in early August. Letters are urgently needed to convince the Senate and Governor Wilson that this bill is important, because of the valuable research and services that it will fund. Please sign the attached letter today!

Request for More Federal Funding for AIDS Activities

"We are striving for the largest single year increase in federal AIDS funding in history." So reads a quote from a recent news release by the AIDS Action Council, a nationwide education and lobbying group based in Washington, D.C. The House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee has recently completed its work on President Clinton's request for AIDS funding for the 1994 federal fiscal year. While the House Committee's exact recommendations were not available at press time, it is imperative that we lobby all members of the Senate Appropriations Committee which will be making its recommendations in July. Eventually the House and Senate recommendations will be reconciled, and both full houses of Congress will vote on the full appropriations package. The table below lists the requests for AIDS funding that President Clinton has made.

What are we asking for? The President's full requested increases must be funded. In addition, as we wrote in our letters to Senators Boxer and Feinstein, the AIDS Housing Opportunities Act needs many more dollars than the President is requesting. So we are urging the Senate Appropriations Committee members to recognize the legitimacy of the President's requests, even in this time of fiscal stringency, and increase funding for AIDS-related activities to new, and badly needed, levels.

Clinton's AIDS Funding Requests, FY '94

Funding Target	1994 Request ($)	Increase over 1993 ($ million)
NIH research	1.3 billion	227
CDC prevention	543,253,000	45
Ryan White Care Act	658,000,000	310
AIDS Housing Opportunities Act	102,700,000	2.7

Call the President!

Please call President Clinton at (202) 456-1111. Urge him to lift the ban on lesbians, gays, and bisexuals in the military, without exception or qualification. He needs to hear that message often. Your call may cost as little as 12 cents and should cost no more than 50 cents. Call before 8 am California time for the cheapest rate.

San Diego Pride Festival

Will you be attending the San Diego Pride Festival on July 17th and 18th? Can you spare an hour or two to help out at the Lambda Letters booth on either or both of those days? We need people to help staff the booth and persuade people who walk by to sign our letters. Some volunteers may also use our legislative directories to identify the legislators who represent the people who sign our letters. People who visit or help at our booth will also have the opportunity to meet Lambda Letters' San Diego Board members. If you can help, please call either (619) 299-3438 or (619) 543-0059.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!!

Place a check mark in front of any of the tasks listed below for which you would like to volunteer:

____ Monthly Letter Composer, 4-5 hours per month

On a monthly basis, contact agencies to identify upcoming pieces of legislation or relevant topics to address on the subjects of women's rights, gay/lesbian/bisexual rights or AIDS/HIV+ issues. Compose letter which is sent to the membership and write newsletter article providing background information on the subject of the letter. Attend monthly staff meeting on the third Sunday of each month.

____ Fundraising Coordinator, 6-12 hours per month

Plan and coordinate 4-6 annual fundraising events.

____ Maintenance of Membership List, 3-4 hours per month

Print and mail standard thank you letters to monetary donors. Monitor who on the membership list has not returned their letters within three months and send them a standard letter to remind them to participate.

____ Delivery of Letters to the Legislature, 10-12 hours/month

During office hours, deliver collected letters to the California legislature twice per week for each of three weeks during the month.

____ Letter Stuffer, 2-3 hours per month

On the first Thursday of every month, help stuff the monthly mailing at the MCC Church in Sacramento. This involves stamping and stuffing envelopes, and folding letters.

____ Group Collector, 1-2 hours per month

Bring monthly letters to any group or meeting you regularly attend each month and encourage members to sign our letters.

We will provide you with the training and support needed to accomplish any of these tasks. Your assistance is greatly appreciated as we continue to grow; we rely on volunteer efforts to keep the project alive. Thanks for you help!

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Please return to:

Lambda Letters Project
6212 Silverton Way
Carmichael, CA 95608
916-965-6851